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MEMORANDUM OF A TOUR IN PARTS OF THE AMHERST, SHWEGYIN, AND PEGU DISTRICTS

BY

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MEMORANDUM OF A TOUR IN PARTS OF THE AMHERST, SHWEGYIN, AND PEGU DISTRICTS.

In pursuance of instructions, which were subsequently modified, that I should report on the amount of archœological work which remained to be done in the Province, I left Rangoon for Moulmein on the 5th December 1891. As it was my intention to explore the whole of the country which constituted the ancient Talaing kingdom of Rāmaññadesa, with special reference to the elucidation of the history of the places mentioned in the Kalyāṇī Inscriptions, I went down to Amherst by boat and returned to Moulmein by land. The Mun or Talaing language is still spoken in the villages between Amherst and Moulmein, and is still taught in monastic schools; but, owing to there being no grants-in-aid given for the encouragement of its study, it is not taught in lay schools. The Talaing language has an unique literature of its own; numbers of inscriptions are recorded in it; and certain questions relating to the ethnography, history, antiquities, and languages of the peoples inhabiting Burma are awaiting solution, because Talaing literature is still a *terra incognita*. Considering that the study of the insignificant dialects of the Karen language, which has no indigenous literature, and whose alphabet was invented by Doctor Wade, an American Missionary, in 1832, receives considerable encouragement, it would be well if the Education Department could see its way to recognize Talaing in the curriculum of studies in indigenous schools in those parts of the Tavoy, Amherst, Shwegyin, and Pegu districts, where it is still spoken and studied. This measure would, no doubt, be pleasing to the Talaings, and would be a token of gracious, although late, recognition of the services rendered by their fellow-countrymen to the British in the first and second Anglo-Burmese wars.

About 20 miles from Amherst is Wagarū, originally founded by King Wagarū near the close of the 13th century A.D. The site of the old city is now completely covered with jungle; but traces of its walls and moat still exist. It is said that its walls were of laterite and that images of the same material existed in its vicinity. But I saw neither the walls nor the images; apparently the laterite walls have served as road-metal to the contractors of the Public Works Department, and the images are hidden by jungle. I am not sure whether

any excavations carried out at Wagarū would bring to light any inscriptions or objects of archæological interest.

On the 11th December, Pagat was visited. There are caves of great historical interest in its neighbourhood. Pagat is the birth-place of Wagarū, who restored the Talaing monarchy after Rāmaññadesa had been subject to Burmese rule for over two centuries, and is full of historical associations. It was here that Dalaban, the 'Hereward the Wake' of the Talaings, utilized the strategic position of the place, and for long defied the Burmese forces of Alompra's son and immediate successor, Naungdawgyi. The caves are natural openings in hills of submarine limestone rock. Some of them are over 1,000 feet in height and have precipitous sides. It is reported that large boxes of Talaing palm-leaf manuscripts, which were originally hidden by patriotic Talaings to escape destruction from the ruthless hands of the Burmese conquerors, are decaying * in the sequestered parts of these caves. There are now few persons who can read and understand these manuscripts; but, whenever they shall have been interpreted by a trained scholar, they will throw a flood of light on Talaing history, and on the history of learned, religious, and commercial relations between Rāmaññadesa, Ceylon, and Southern India. They will also solve certain questions connected with Pāli and Sanskrit philology and literature.

Owing to want of time, only two caves, namely, the Kawgun and Pagat, could be visited. The former presents a splendid sight. Its precipitous side facing the Kawgun village is completely covered by painted terra cotta tablets arranged symmetrically in the form of terraces and spires. Inside the cave are lying images of various sizes in different stages of decay and ruin. They are found to be made of the following substances: lead, brass, wood, stone, brick, and lacquerware. The majority of them bespeak their antiquity as they differ from modern ones in the following particulars: the head is surmounted by a spiral truncated cone; the bristles of the hair are represented; the ears do not touch the shoulders; the forehead is prominent, but remarkably narrow; the eye-brows, eyes,

* Subsequently, I learnt from a priest of the Mahāyin *Kyaung* at Kado that complete sets of Talaing manuscripts are being preserved in the Royal Libraries at Bangkok. It would be a good thing to obtain a set for the Bernard Free Library at Rangoon. Perhaps, the British Consul could be moved to prefer a request to this effect to His Siamese Majesty.

The late Dr. Forchhammer succeeded in procuring a number of ancient Talaing manuscripts from the caves in the neighbourhood of Pagat. I understand some of them, if not all, are now lying in the Bernard Free Library.

and lips are the most prominent features of the face; the body is short and stout and the head is disproportionately big; the limbs are full and large; the sole of the right leg is not displayed.

No history is known to exist about these caves; nor is there any person, layman or priest, who can relate anything historically true about them. But, judging from the fact that Rāmaññadesa was subject to Cambodian rule from the 6th to the 10th century A. D., and again to Siamese rule in the 14th century, it may be safely inferred that most of the images are of Cambodian or Siamese origin. The general architectural effect of the cave and the resemblance of these images to those of Siam favour this view. A closer examination in detail, however, might reveal the fact that some of the images were dedicated to Brahmanical worship, which was favoured by the ancient Kings of Cambodia, that others are of Sinhalese or Dravidian origin, and that there is some relationship, historical, religious, and architectural, between the caves in the Amherst district and the Cave Temples of India. I brought away three small wooden images with legends conjectured to be in the Siamese character inscribed on their pedestals.

The Pagat cave was next visited. It contains nothing of interest. It is now the home of bats whose dung yields an annual revenue of Rs. 600. It seems to me that the contents of this cave have been made away with in order to make room for the more valuable dung!

Near this cave is a monastery, now occupied by a priest from Upper Burma. Since the annexation, numbers of Buddhist priests from the upper province have settled down in this district. Owing to their reputed learning and their conversational powers, they are highly esteemed and are abundantly supplied with the necessaries of life. The Talaing priests are, as a rule, somewhat lax in their observance of the precepts, *e.g.*, they are possessed of boats and landed estates, drive about in bullock-carts, drink tea in the evenings, and smoke cigars in public. Such conduct is now being followed by the priests from Upper Burma, who appear to be imbued with the truth of the proverb: "When you are at Rome, act like the Romans."

The burden of supporting the priests, who do very little in return for their maintenance, and who idle away most of their time, because the educational work is better and more efficiently done by the lay schools, is indeed a heavy one. On an average about 100 houses support a *kyaung*, and every village

that has any pretence to piety, must have a *kyaung* of its own. The standard of material comfort of the villagers, who maintain the *kyaung*, may be a low one, but the *pôngyi* is fed on the fat of the land.

On the 14th December, I visited Kawkareik, which is inhabited by Burmans, Talaings, Shans, Karens, and Taungthus. The Taungthus are an interesting people. They have a literature* of their own, and I obtained a copy of a poetical work called Suttanippan (Suttanibbāna or Nibbānasutta). The language of the Taungthus contains words bodily borrowed from the languages of the people by whom they are surrounded. The Taungthus resemble their congeners, the Karens, in physical appearance; their build is thick-set, and they have full, round, and heavy features. At Kawkareik the Taungthu language is purer than at Thatôn, although there have been many inter-marriages between the Taungthus and the Shans.

The meaning of the word 'Taungthu' is an *inhabitant of highlands* in contradistinction to the people of the lowlands. A similar distinction obtains in Cambodia, the ancient Kingdom of the Khmers (*vide* Mouhot's *Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China, Cambodia, and Laos*, page 24).

"Having a great taste for music, and being gifted with ears excessively fine, with them† originated the tam-tam, so prized among the neighbouring nations; and by uniting its sounds to those of a large drum, they obtain music tolerably harmonious. The art of writing is unknown to them; and as they necessarily lead a wandering life, they seem to have lost nearly all traditions of the past. The only information I could extract from their oldest chief was, that far beyond the chain of mountains which crosses the country from north to south are other *people of the high country*—such is the name they give themselves; that of *savage* wounds them greatly—that they have many relations there, and they even cite names of villages or hamlets as far as the provinces occupied by the Annamite invaders. Their practice is to bury their dead."

The above description would, with slight modifications and with the exception of the part relating to their ignorance of the art of writing, answer very well for that of the Taungthus.

* "My authority for this is the following extract of a note from a gentleman of the American Mission to Lieutenant Newmarch:—

"The Toungthoos *have* a written language and books, and kyoungs and priests. I have *seen* their books, and on the fall of Sebastopol I *printed* the Governor-General's proclamation for Lieutenant Burn, in Toungthoo, but I confess it was the *first* and only thing that was ever printed in Toungthoo.'"—Yule's *Mission to Ava*, Appendix M., page 383.

† Savages to the east of Cambodia, called by the Cambodians their elder brothers.

The Taungthus call themselves Pha-o, *ancient fathers*, and have a tradition that large numbers of them emigrated years ago from their original seat of Thatôn to a State of the same name in the Shan country. Since then they have borrowed largely from Shan literature: in fact, their books, most of which have been translated from Shan, contain a large admixture of Shan words.

The Taungthu alphabet appears to have closer affinity to that of the Talaings or the Burmans rather than to that of the Shans as it recognises the media letters, which are absent in Shan. The one peculiarity deserving of notice in the pronunciation of the letters is, the Indian sound accorded to the letters, of the Palatal class, *e.g.*, *c* is pronounced *ch* and not *ts* as the Thibetans, Burmans, or Talaings would. This is a remarkable fact showing the probability of the Taungthus having received their alphabet direct from Indian colonists or the curious incident of the capacity of a monosyllabic language to assimilate towards an Aryan alphabet.

The Taungthu language, as evidenced by the comparative vocabulary shown below, has closer affinity to Burmese than to Shan or Talaing—

Taungthu.	Burmese.	Meaning.
Ta-pâ*	Ta, tit	One.
Nî-pâ	Hnit	Two.
Sôn-pâ	Thôn:	Three.
Lît-pâ	Le:	Four.
Ngat-pâ	Ngâ:	Five.
Sû-pâ	Chauk	Six.
Nit-pâ	Khunhit	Seven.
Sôt-pâ	Shit	Eight.
Kut-pâ	Ko:	Nine.
Tachî: †	Tasè	Ten.
Mî: ‡	Ne	Sun.
Lâ	La	Moon.
Châ	Kyè	Star.
Phâ	Pha	Father.
Me:	Mi	Mother.
Lô	Lû	Man.

* Pâ denotes an individual unit. Its cognate form pronounced with the heavy tone is employed as a numerative in Burmese.

† *Ch* in Taungthu is interchangeable with *s* in Burmese.

‡ This word means *fire* in Burmese; but the primitive conception of the sun as the *source of heat* may have possibly existed.

: The *double dots* denote that the word to which they are affixed should be pronounced with the heavy tone.

As I had to conduct personally the Burmese portion of the examination for Myoôkships held by the Educational Syndicate, I returned to Rangoon on the 19th and went back to Moulmein on the 26th December.

On the 28th, I started for Thatôn and reached it on the same day.

Thatôn has been identified by Burmese and Talaing writers as the Suvaṇṇabhūmi of the Buddhist books, and the Aurea Regio of Ptolemy and others. It is bounded on the east by the Thinganeik range, which is about 12 miles long, and trends from north to south. On the west is an immense rice plain, which is about 15 miles in breadth, and beyond that is the sea. In the rainy season the plain is covered by water and navigation by boat is possible.

According to a Talaing tradition, Thatôn was founded by Sīharājā, a contemporary of Gotama Buddha. In choosing the site of the new city he consulted his foster-father, the Rishi of Zingyaik, and was advised to select a spot where gold was found, and to which a large population would be attracted in a short time. The place, where the Jubilee Memorial fountain erected in 1888 is now playing, is still pointed out as the site of the palace of Sīharājā and Manuhā, the first and last kings of Thatôn. Close by is the gold-bearing stream of Shwegyaung San, which is perennial and issues from the Thinganeik (Singanika) hill. Gold is still worked by isolated individuals at the beginning and close of the rainy season, but the quantities obtained are not commensurate with the amount of labour involved.

There are five Talaing inscriptions at Thatôn: four in the enclosure of the Shwezāyan pagoda, and the remaining one under a banyan tree at Nyaungwaing. Their palœography indicates that their age is about 400 years.

Three brick buildings near the Shwezāyan pagoda are known as the libraries whence Anawratazaw, King of Pagan, is said to have removed the "five elephant-loads of Buddhist scriptures" in 1057 A.D.

The terra cotta tablets inserted in niches in the Thagyapaya within the same enclosure are of considerable interest. Most of them have been destroyed, and the meaning of the representations is not accurately understood. But they appear to indicate that the people, whoever they were, who constructed these tablets undoubtedly professed Brahmanism or Hinduism, and that they had attained to some degree of civilization. Siva with his trident is the predominant figure; conveyances

are drawn by single ponies, and women wear their hair in big knots at the back of the head. The features of the persons represented are of Mongolian cast, and resemble those of the Karens and Taungthus of the present day.*

The Thagyapaya, in common with other pagodas built by the Talaings, is constructed of hewn laterite; and the existence of several tanks in its vicinity indicates the source whence this building material was obtained.

There are three *basso relievo* sculptures on stone representing Vishnuic symbols lying in the enclosure of the Assistant Commissioner's Court-house. It has been arranged to remove them to the Phayre Museum at Rangoon.

Nat-worship is still, like in other parts of Burma, one of the prevailing forms of belief at Thatôn. I visited the temple of the Nat called P'o-p'o, *grandfather*. Tradition, which is, in this case, *primâ facie* palpably false, says that, when this Nat was a human being, he was charged by Sona and Uttara, the Buddhist missionaries who visited Rāmaññadesa in the 3rd century B.C., to safeguard Thatôn against the attacks of the *bilus* or fierce monsters. The image of P'o-p'o represents an old man of about 60 years sitting cross-legged, with a white fillet on the head, and a moustache and pointed beard. The forehead is broad and the face bears an intelligent expression. The upper portion of the body is nude, and the lower is dressed in a *cheik paso* or loin-cloth of the zigzag pattern so much prized by the people of Burma. The right hand rests on the right knee, and the left is in the act of counting the beads of a rosary. The height of the figure is about five feet. In the apartment on the left of P'o-p'o is an image representing a benign-looking *wun* or governor in full official dress. Facing the second image in a separate apartment is the representation of a wild, fierce-looking *bo* or military officer in uniform. The fourth apartment on the left of the *bo* is dedicated to a female Nat, who is presumably the wife of P'o-p'o. But there is no image representing her. It is a strange coincidence that, like in India and Ceylon, these shrines are held in veneration by various nationalities professing different creeds.

The images of the Nats are in a good state of preservation as they are in the custody of a medium, who gains a comfortable livelihood. An annual festival, which is largely attended, is held in their honour.

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* A description of these tablets is given at pages 716 and 717 of the *British Burma Gazetteer*, Vol. II.

On the 31st December, I visited the Kôktheinnāyôn hill, which is about 8 miles to the west of Bilin. On the top of the hill are two images representing the Buddhist missionaries, Soṇa and Uttara, in a recumbent posture and with their hands clasped towards a stone vessel placed between them. The vessel is reputed to contain a hair of Gotama Buddha. Around Soṇa and Uttara are the figures of *rahandas* or Buddhist saints, with full, round, and heavy features. The forehead of these figures is broad and prominent, but retreating; the nose is big and long; and the mouth large. At the four corners of the platform on the top of the hill, are figures of a strange monster, half human and half beast, called "Manussīha." There is no such Pāli word; but the term has been coined to designate a human-headed monster with two bodies of a lion. The origin of these monsters is thus recorded in the Kalyāṇī Inscriptions.:

"The town (Golamattikanagara) was situated on the seashore; and there was a *Rakkhasī*, who lived in the sea, and was in the habit of always seizing and devouring every child that was born in the King's palace. On the very night of the arrival of the two *theras*, the Chief Queen of the King gave birth to a child. The *Rakkhasī*, knowing that a child had been born in the King's palace, came towards the town, surrounded by 500 other *Rakkhasas*, with the object of devouring it. When the people saw the *Rakkhasī*, they were stricken with terror, and raised a loud cry. The two *theras*, perceiving that the *Rakkhasī* and her attendants had assumed the exceedingly frightful appearance of lions, each with one head and two bodies, created (by means of their supernatural power) monsters of similar appearance, but twice the number of those accompanying the *Rakkhasī*, and these monsters chased the *Rakkhasas* and obstructed their further progress. When the *pisācas* saw twice their own number of monsters created by the supernatural power of the two *theras*, they cried out: 'Now we shall become their prey,' and being stricken with terror, fled towards the sea."

Fergusson, in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (page 622), makes the following pertinent remarks on the origin of this monster: "This illustration (of the Shwedagôn pagoda at Rangoon) is also valuable as showing the last lineal descendant of these great human-headed winged lions that once adorned the portals of the palaces at Nineveh; but after nearly 3,000 years of wandering and ill-treatment have degenerated into these wretched caricatures of their former selves."

In an image-house at the foot of the hill, is a brass bell on which the old Talaing inscription has been effaced and a modern Burmese one engraved. It is, perhaps, hopeless to recover a copy of the ancient inscription, even if any ever existed.

On the 1st January 1892, I visited the Tīzaung pagoda at Zôkthôk village, which is about 6 miles to the north of Bilin. The basement of the pagoda is constructed of blocks of laterite each about 2 feet by 1½ feet and by 1 foot in dimensions. Some of the images as well as the receptacles for offerings, &c., placed around it are of the same material, and bear traces of ornamentation. In the neighbourhood are sculptures in relief engraved on large laterite blocks, which are so arranged as to form panels on the face of a wall or rampart of earth 450 feet long, and 12 feet high. They are known as the *Sindat-myindat* (elephants and horses of war); but the representations are those of elephants and tigers or lions alternately with those of Nats interspersed between them.

The Kelātha (Kelāsa) pagoda—the Kelāsabhapabbatacetiya of the Kalyāṇī Inscriptions—was visited on the 2nd January. It is situated on a steep hill about 2,000 feet high, and appears to have been renovated. It derives its sanctity from the tradition that, like the Kyaiktiyo, and Kôktheinnāyôn pagodas, it contains one of the three hairs given by Gotama Buddha to the Rishi Kelāsa. Near the pagoda are two stone inscriptions erected by King Dhammacetī. They are in the Talaing character. The engraved portion of one has been entirely destroyed and only the socket remains standing, while half of the other has been broken. Only one "Manussīha" facing seawards is found on the pagoda platform. Numbers of square bricks with the representation of a lotus flower impressed upon them are lying about the place.

The Kelāsa hill abounds in plants used in Burmese medicine. The plant called Maukk'adaw is employed as an antidote against snake-poison, and another called K'wegaungzawet is used in curing hydrophobia. It is a well-known fact that cases of hydrophobia have been cured with medicines which are a secret to Burmese doctors, who are utterly ignorant of the Pasteur method. It appears to me that the interests of the science of medicine and of humanity generally would be served if the study of Burmese Pharmacopœia could be scientifically pursued. The Medical Department could, perhaps, instruct the Burmese Assistant Surgeons to take up the study.

On the same day, the village of Ayetthèma, which is 4 miles off, was visited. It is the ancient Taikkulā and the Golamattikanagara of the Kalyānī Inscriptions. Dr. Forchhammer in his *Notes on the Early History and Geography of British Burma*, II, page 7, says: "Though the seashore is now about 12 miles* to the west, this place was still an important seaport in the 16th and 17th centuries; it is marked on the map of Professor Lassen as Takkala, but erroneously placed a few miles north of Tavoy. Cables, ropes, and other vestiges of sea-going vessels are still frequently dug up about Taikkala."

The subject of the identification of the Takôla of Ptolemy and the Kalah of Arabian Geographers is discussed at pages 12—16 (*ibid*), and at pages 198 and 199 of McCrindle's *Ancient India described by Ptolemy*.

Very little appears to be known about the ancient Golas (Skr. Gaudas) of Gaur (*vide* pages 35—36 of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Volume V). If the evidence afforded by the Kalyānī Inscriptions can be relied on, the settlement in Suvannabhumi was apparently colonized from Bengal during one of the struggles for supremacy between Buddhism and Brahmanism and possibly Jainism also. At the conclusion of the Third Buddhist Council, it was remembered by the mother-country, and missionaries were sent to it in order to re-establish community of faith. That Buddhism was prevalent in many parts of India from 300 B.C. to 400 A.D. is abundantly clear from the researches of Prinsep, Lassen, and Burnouf.

There was a Talaing inscription near Ayetthèma. It was removed to the Phayre Museum at Rangoon about 8 years ago.

Traces of a wall and moat still exist, and fragments of pottery and of glazed tiles are found in the neighbourhood.

Pegu was reached on the night of the 3rd January. Extensive ruins are extant on the east and west face of the town. The ruins at Zaingganaing, on the west side, comprise those of Kalyānīsimā, Mahācetī, Yathemyo, Kyaikpun,† and Shwegūgyi. There are 10 inscriptions at Kalyānīsimā, one

* Of late, the sea has been encroaching on the land. At the time of my visit, the sites of many villages, which derived their wealth and prosperity from the rice trade, were under water.

† Four colossal images of Buddha sitting cross-legged, back to back, and facing the cardinal points. The height of each image is about 90 feet; the thumb measures 8 feet, the arm from the inner elbow-joint to the tip of the middle finger 33 feet, the distance from knee to knee 62 feet. The images represent the four Buddhas, who have appeared in this Kalpa, namely, Kakusandha, Konagamana, Kassapa, and Gotama.

at Yathemyo and 22 at Shwegūgyi. Between Kalyāṇīsimā and Mahācetī is a Brobdignaggian image of Gotama Buddha in a recumbent posture, measuring about 90 feet in length. Treasure-hunters have been hard at work among these ruins, and I am told that their acts of vandalism are countenanced both by the *pôngyis* and the native officials, who expect a share in the "finds." Most of the stone inscriptions have been broken by treasure-hunters or by pagoda slaves who were anxious to obliterate the record of their origin. In some cases, the names of persons dedicated as pagoda slaves have been carefully chiselled out.

Pegu is the Thebaid of Rāmaññña as Pagan is of Burma Proper, and its ruins have some claim to a detailed archæological survey. The Kalyāṇīsimā is the most interesting of all. It is an ancient Hall of Ordination, to which Buddhist priests from all parts of Burma, from Ceylon and Siam, used to flock to receive their *upasampadā* ordination. Close by are ten stone-slabs covered with inscriptions on both sides. All of them are more or less broken, but the fragments, which are lying scattered about, can easily be restored. Their average dimensions are about 12 feet high, 4 feet 2 inches wide, and 1 foot and 3 inches thick. They were set up by King Dhammacetī after he had founded the Kalyāṇīsimā in 1476 A.D. The language of the inscriptions is partly Pāli and partly Talaing. Numerous copies of the Pāli portion on palm-leaf are extant, and from two of them the text has been transcribed in the Roman character and translated. Only the notes are wanting to complete the work. The chief value of the Kalyāṇī Inscriptions rests on the detailed information they give of the manner in which *Simās* should be consecrated in order to secure their validity, and of the intercourse of Pegu and Burma with Ceylon and the Dekkhan in the 15th century A.D.

The Mahācetī pagoda is a huge pile of brick and laterite, built by Hanthawadi Sinbyuyin about the middle of the 16th century A. D. Only the square basement now remains, measuring about 320 feet wide at the base, and about 170 feet high.

Nothing definite is known about the ruins of Yathemyo, Kyaikpun, and Shwegūgyi. In the neighbourhood of the last-named Pagoda, glazed terra cotta tablets exhibiting, in relief, figures of human beings and animals were found lying scattered about. A number of such tablets have been collected in Mr. Jackson's garden near the Kalyāṇīsimā. All these should be acquired by Government and sent to the Phayre Museum at

Rangoon. They appear to have been manufactured by colonists from India.

The religious buildings at Pegu suffered greatly at the hands of the Portuguese adventurer, Philip de Brito, and Nicote *alias* Maung Zinga, who held his Court at Syriam at the beginning of the 17th century, and also at the hands of Alompra's soldiery, who, being incensed at the acts of sacrilege committed by the Talaings during their ephemeral conquest of Burma Proper, wreaked their vengeance when their turn came. It is said that Maung Zinga, who was originally a ship-boy, and was stationed at Syriam to watch events, and to represent his master, the King of Arakan, entertained ambitious designs of holding Pegu as a dependency of the Crown of Portugal and of converting the Peguans to Christianity. For the attainment of this object, he allied himself with Byinnya Dala, the Governor of Martaban, who was tributary to Siam, and opened communications with the Viceroy of Goa. He failed in his object and met with his death, because he had alienated the sympathy of the people by breaking down their religious buildings and shipping off to Goa the treasures obtained therefrom in "five ships." In the plaintive words of the *Thamaing* or history of the Shwemawdaw Pagoda: "Maung Zinga was a heretic, who, for 10 years, searched for pagodas to destroy them. Religion perished in Rāmañña, and good works were no longer performed."

The Shwegūgale Pagoda is in a good state of preservation. Its basement consists of a gallery containing 64 images of Buddha, each 4 feet 8 inches high, which were apparently constructed by Siamese architects. It is octagonal in shape, and is a remarkable structure. On each side is an entrance, 6 feet high by 3 feet 2 inches wide, and 7 feet 2 inches long; they lead to an interior gallery, 5 feet 2 inches wide and 7 feet 3 inches high; the entire gallery passing round the central portion, measures 246 feet.

Close to the Mazinchaung, is the Shwenathā Pagoda. It contains an image sculptured in relief on a tablet of sandstone measuring 5½ feet by 4 feet. The image has an Indian cast of features, and is fabled to be shackled with fetters owing to its having once fled from Pegu. It is said that this image as well as a similar one of the same name on the eastern face of the city were brought away from Taikkala. The resemblance between these images and the figure of Avalokiteswara (Plate LV of *The Cave Temples of India* by Fergusson and Burgess) is very striking, and suggests the idea

that they have probably been modified to suit their Buddhistic character. Near this image was picked up a small terra cotta tablet bearing a Sanskrit legend. This tablet and other old images lying about the place have apparently been obtained by ransacking the relic-chambers of ancient pagodas.

The eastern face of Pegu was visited on the 5th January. The Shwemawdaw Pagoda, said to contain two hairs of Gotama Buddha enshrined by Mahāsala and Cūlasāla, sons of Pi*nd*a-kamahāse*tt*hi of Zaungtū, was being re-gilt under the supervision of its trustees. The Pagoda was last repaired by Bodawpaya, one of the numerous sons of Alompra, about a hundred years ago, and a broken inscription recording this meritorious act is lying on the Pagoda platform. There is also an ancient brass bell said to have been presented by Byinnya Dala after his conquest of Ava in 1752 A.D.

Like the Shwedagôn Pagoda at Rangoon, the Shwemadaw is a Buddhist shrine of great sanctity. Successive Kings of Burma and Pegu lavished their treasures on it in repairing and enlarging it. When originally built, it was only 75 feet high, but as it now stands, it is about 288 feet high, and about 1,350 feet in circumference at the base.

A little to the north-east of Shwemawdaw is a small hill, fabled to have been the resting-place of two *Hamsa* birds, when the region about Pegu was under the sea. At the foot of this hill are two octagonal pillars of fine granite. The length of one is about 11 feet and that of the other is about 5. They bear no inscription, but a tradition is current that they were erected by *Kala* or Indian merchants who subsequently claimed the country as their own by virtue of pre-occupation, and that they were driven out by a Talaing prince. However, the true history of the pillars appears to be that, like a similar granite pillar in the ancient town of Tenasserim in the Mergui district, they were erected, when Rāmaññdesa was subject to Siamese rule, to mark the centre of the ancient city of Ha*m*savatī, and that most probably a human being or beings were buried alive below the pillars in the belief that the spirits of the deceased would keep an unremitting watch over the city.

A good panoramic view of Pegu and its suburbs is obtained from the Shwe-aungyo Pagoda which is situated at the south-east corner of the city walls. At about 700 yards from the southern face is Jetuvatī, the encampment of Alompra, who beleaguered Pegu in 1757 A.D. Within the walls are visible the sites of the palaces of the great kings of Ha*m*savatī like Hanthawaddi Sinbyuyin known to European writers as

Branginoco, Yāzādarit, and Dhammacetī. Traces of a double wall and moat are also seen, the walls being in good condition.

I have now traversed through the whole of the ancient Talaing Kingdom of Rāmaññadesa proper. The stone inscriptions are about the only objects of archæological value; and should, I think, for the purpose of preservation, be removed to the Phayre Museum at Rangoon, provided of course that they are ownerless and that the people of the locality do not offer any objection to the removal. In the case, however, of inscriptions, whose size and weight render their removal to Rangoon unadvisable, they should be collected at some convenient and central place and arrangements should be made to protect them from the weather. If they remain *in situ* they are liable to be defaced or weather-worn. Manuscripts of historical interest are extremely scarce; the architectural structures have in most cases been renovated in the modern style; and the religious buildings worthy of conservation are being looked after by the people. With the exception of the pagodas, which are generally octagonal in shape, and of the new *kyaungs* recently constructed at Moulmein, there is scarcely any building of historic or architectural interest. No *stupas* or topes like those of Upper India were met with, and the enquiries instituted failed to elicit any information regarding the existence of any records, lithic or otherwise, in the Asoka character. The absence of any records in this character, both in Rāmaññadesa and at Pagan, whither it is supposed the Burmese conquerors removed their spoils of war, throws considerable doubt on the authenticity of the account relating to the mission of Soṇa and Uttara at the conclusion of the Third Council, as stated in the *Mahāvamsa* and other Buddhist books. The question, however, may be considered to be an open one, because the information afforded by Talaing, Cambodian, and Siamese records, whenever they shall have been examined and interpreted, may help towards its solution.

RANGOON:
Dated the 29th January 1892.

TAW SEIN KO,
Government Translator,
on special duty.

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